

Entry #: 7

Date Submitted: 2/11/2022 3:40 PM

## About

Gaston County requests proposals from its internal departments for projects to help the community recover from and respond to COVID-19.

Gaston County has been awarded \$43,612,126 in Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (Recovery Funding), as part of the American Rescue Plan Act. This infusion of federal resources is intended to help turn the tide on the pandemic, address its economic fallout, and lay the foundation for a strong and equitable recovery.

Gaston County is committed to investing these funds in projects that:

- Align to county strategic plan and community priorities
- Support equitable outcomes for most impacted populations
- Leverage and align with other governmental funding sources
- Make best use of this one-time infusion of resources
- Have a lasting impact

Please note that applications must be complete before they will be reviewed by the review committee. The committee will prioritize projects that do not supplant regular operational budgets, cost between \$25,000-\$1,000,000, and clearly address a need caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Click here to read the County's ARPA project selection process, including a project ranking methodology.](#)

[Click here to learn more about compliance.](#)

[Click here to learn more about eligible uses of the County's ARPA funding.](#)

## Timeline

- May 2021: County received initial ARPA funding
- August 31, 2021: Began quarterly financial reporting
- December 31, 2022: Second quarterly report
- December 2024: All funds must be encumbered
- December 2026: All funds must be spent

## Form Instructions

**Availability:** This form will not close. Submissions will be reviewed in the order they are received.

**Save and Resume Later:** Clicking the Save button (bottom right of form) will save your progress and allow you to either copy or email a personalized link to your in-progress entry. This link may be shared with others. Anyone who has the link to the saved form entry can pick up where you left off and complete your submission.

**Submit:** When your form is complete and ready for review by the ARPA Project Review Committee, click submit. You will not be able to edit the form after you click submit. If you need make any changes to your form after submission, please contact Budget.

**Confirmation Email:** When you click submit, you will receive a confirmation email to the email address listed in the "Primary Contact Personnel Email" field. It will include a copy of your entry details in the body of the email, as well as a link for viewing your submission online, which may be shared with anyone.

## Questions?

Justin Amos  
justin.amos@gastongov.com

Project Name  
Chapel Grove Waterline Extension

Department Name and Number  
4265 - Public Works

Primary Contact Personnel  
Dan Ziehm

Primary Contact Personnel Email  
Dan.Ziehm@gastongov.com

Location of Project (if applicable)  
Chapel Grove Community, 5201 Lewis Rd., Gaston County, North Carolina 28052

Project Category  
5. Infrastructure

**Description of Project**  
Project will design and install approximately 10,000 LF of new 10" waterline along Chapel Grove Road, from Chapel Grove Elementary School to Linwood Road to serve the health needs of the existing Chapel Grove Community currently served by groundwater wells or community well systems extracting drinking water from the groundwater table. The new line will tie into Two Rivers Utilities existing system at Linwood Road. Two Rivers has been contacted about this project, and they are open to entering into an Agreement to provide public water service to this community. The Chapel Grove Waterline project has been on the County CIP since FY '13. The project aligns with the County's Strategic Plan in the Community Health, Safety and Well-Being Focus Area. The Project falls under the EC- 5 Infrastructure, 5.11 Drinking Water: Transmission & Distribution. The project also aligns with EPA's DWSRF Category 2 Transmission & Distribution.

Project Start Date  
1/1/2022

Project End Date  
6/30/2024

**Project Plan**  
In accordance with N.C.G.S. 143-64.31 and following Gaston County's Uniform Guidance Policy and Procedures, an RFQ for Professional Architecture/Engineering Design Services was advertised January 2022, and a selection will be made by February 28, 2022. The project will be taken to the Board, as directed, March 22, 2022. A/E Firm will be given NTP by April 4, 2022. Project design could take up to 6 months depending on possible right of way acquisition, and coordination with Two Rivers Utilities. An Agreement will be executed between Gaston County and City of Gastonia / Two Rivers Utilities will provide water service to the community. Gaston County will be the lead agency on the project. Right of Way acquisition, permitting and Construction could take 12 months.

**Please explain both the NC state and federal legal authority to undertake this program.**  
The County does have the authority to construct water infrastructure, but the County's Attorney will need to verify if NCGS 160A, Article 16 and NCGS 153A, Article 15 are the correct statutes.

**Link to COVID-19**

Stay at home orders and business shutdowns stemming from the early outbreak of COVID have made health, hygiene, and safety a more obvious priority. Residential water usage has increased. However, vulnerable households still lack reliable access to water. Unexpected events from droughts to floods, and social disruptions like COVID, have highlighted the need to bolster the reliability, resilience and sustainability of the water system in this area to provide critical water services under more variable and uncertain conditions. The threat of ground water depletion is more present since the pandemic, and the associated increased residential water usage. Protecting the ground water dependent ecosystems should be considered. This project will provide the community that maintains their own water supply with a protective action for future disruptions and help preserve the natural ecosystem.

**Statement of Need**

The Chapel Grove Community, along with Chapel Grove Elementary School, is currently served by groundwater wells or community well systems extracting drinking water from the groundwater table. Per the City of Gastonia's Southwest Plan, Two Rivers Utilities may not address this area's need for public water until 2040-2050 CIP Budget. Past droughts have resulted in a shortage of sufficient drinking water and, subsequently, many drinking wells have low pressure or have gone dry. In addition, the elementary school serving this community does not currently have a municipal source of water for reliable clean water. Currently the school tests the drinking water for contaminants daily. In this project area, there are three known or previously known contamination sites. The safety and quality of private well water is the responsibility of the owners. If there is a Duke Energy power outage in the community, the well pumps will not function, and the school, businesses and residents will be without water.

**Population Served**

The project will serve portions of the 2022 Census Tracts 317.04 (Diversity Index 40, which has increased by 12 since 2010) and 317.03 (Diversity Index 64, up by 17 since 2010), adjacent to the Qualified Census Tract 332.04. Chapel Grove Elementary School is a Title I school, located in Census Tract 317.04 in Gaston County. 80% of this census tract is white (down 11% from 2010), and 9% black (up 31% from 2010). Chapel Grove Elementary School is part of Gaston County Public Schools in Gastonia, N.C. and serves approximately 430 children in grades PK-5. 52.6% of the students are considered economically disadvantaged. Census Tract 317.04 was considered a QCT in 2021. The total population of 3,681 has dropped 0.2% since 2010. The US Census Bureau reports that the Median Household Income for Gaston County is \$56,595. The 2021 Median Family Income for tract 317.04 is \$58,075. This is considered slightly higher than moderate income.

**Results**

Gaston County Environmental Health reports that here are numerous private wells in the area within a 1-mile radius of Chapel Grove Elementary School. The subdivisions along Lewis Road and Chapel Grove Rd are served by up to eight community wells. The private wells, that serve 1 or 2 houses, do not have to meet state or federal drinking water standards and are not required to be sampled except at the time of installation. Community wells are sampled on a regular basis and are required to be chlorinated and meet state and federal drinking water standards. In this same area, there are three known or previously known contamination sites. Gaston County will partner with Two Rivers Utilities to waive tap fees and educate residents on public water. Master meters may be installed for the residents on community wells. Historically, community well water rates are higher than Two Rivers' rates.

**Evaluation**

Two Rivers Utilities will be able to provide data in their annual drinking water quality report as well as any connections made to the constructed system and the revenue they collect. Gaston Schools can provide current contamination data for comparison. County Environmental Health will have data relative to monitoring the wells in the area for contaminations. A Performance Target in the County's Strategic Plan directs staff to develop a method of analysis reflecting the number of projects and miles of water and sewer extensions funded by the County and its stakeholders.

**Equity Impact**

The pandemic reminded us that far too many Americans, disproportionately low-income people and people of color, lack the essential components of healthy communities: affordable healthcare, safe parks, clean air and safe drinking water to name a few. Underserved populations and neighborhoods may have the greatest pandemic recovery needs. Of the 29 public elementary schools in Gaston County, Chapel Grove Elementary and one other elementary school is served by well water. Funding this waterline project will deliver safe and affordable water to a vulnerable community and the elementary school that serves it.

**Project Partners**

Gaston County will pursue an Agreement with Two Rivers, and Gaston Schools to partner in a successful project that provides the community with safe clean drinking water.

**Capacity**

Currently there are 3 full time project coordinators. Cary Rodriguez has 20+ years of Local government Project management experience and will be managing the project from design through construction and close out. She is dedicated to managing projects with Federal Funding and works closely with Finance to ensure proper monitoring and reporting is achieved. Her experience with federal funds to date includes CMAQ projects and FTA projects.

**Special Considerations**

COVID-19 has reinforced the importance of access to safe and reliable water. With Grant funding, and partnerships with Gaston County Schools and Two Rivers Utilities, the County can prioritize addressing the lack of infrastructure in disadvantaged areas. COVID related impacts on residential water usage may begin to reach pre-COVID levels, but there could be long term impacts if more people continue to work from home, or unemployment remains high.

**ADDITIONAL INFO:**

The Department of Treasury Compliance & Reporting Guidance Part 1, C.2.d Investments in Water Sewer and Broadband indicates that recipients may use SLFRF award funds to cover costs incurred for eligible projects planned or started prior to March 3, 2021, provided that the project costs covered by SLFRF award funds are incurred after March 3, 2021. Furthermore, Part 1 D.8 directs recipients to follow Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200.317 through 2 CFR 200.327.

The EPA Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) Eligibility Handbook identifies six broad categories of eligible projects. This project falls under Category 2 – Transmission and Distribution: New water main extensions to serve existing residents not served by a safe supply of potable water (this includes installation of the service line up to premise plumbing). THE DWSRF also states that "Eligible costs include actual pre-construction (planning and design, including costs associated with obtaining project authorization and issuance/execution of the loan) and construction costs that are directly associated with the project and issuance of the loan." And, "Costs for acquiring land are eligible only if the land is needed to locate eligible project components and the land is acquired from a willing seller."

Gaston County's average household size is 2.6, with a Federal Poverty Guideline of \$18,810.

**Which of the County's three strategic focus areas best describes the purpose of this request?**

Economic development and planned growth

**Budget**

**Attachments**

 [A\\_Chapel\\_Grove\\_ES\\_ARPA\\_Map.pdf](#)  
1.68 MB



**Revenues**

Untitled	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

Total Revenues: **Costs Sum**  
\$0.00

**Expenditures**

Untitled	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
Capital	\$472,000.00	\$3,000,000.00			
	\$472,000.00	\$3,000,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

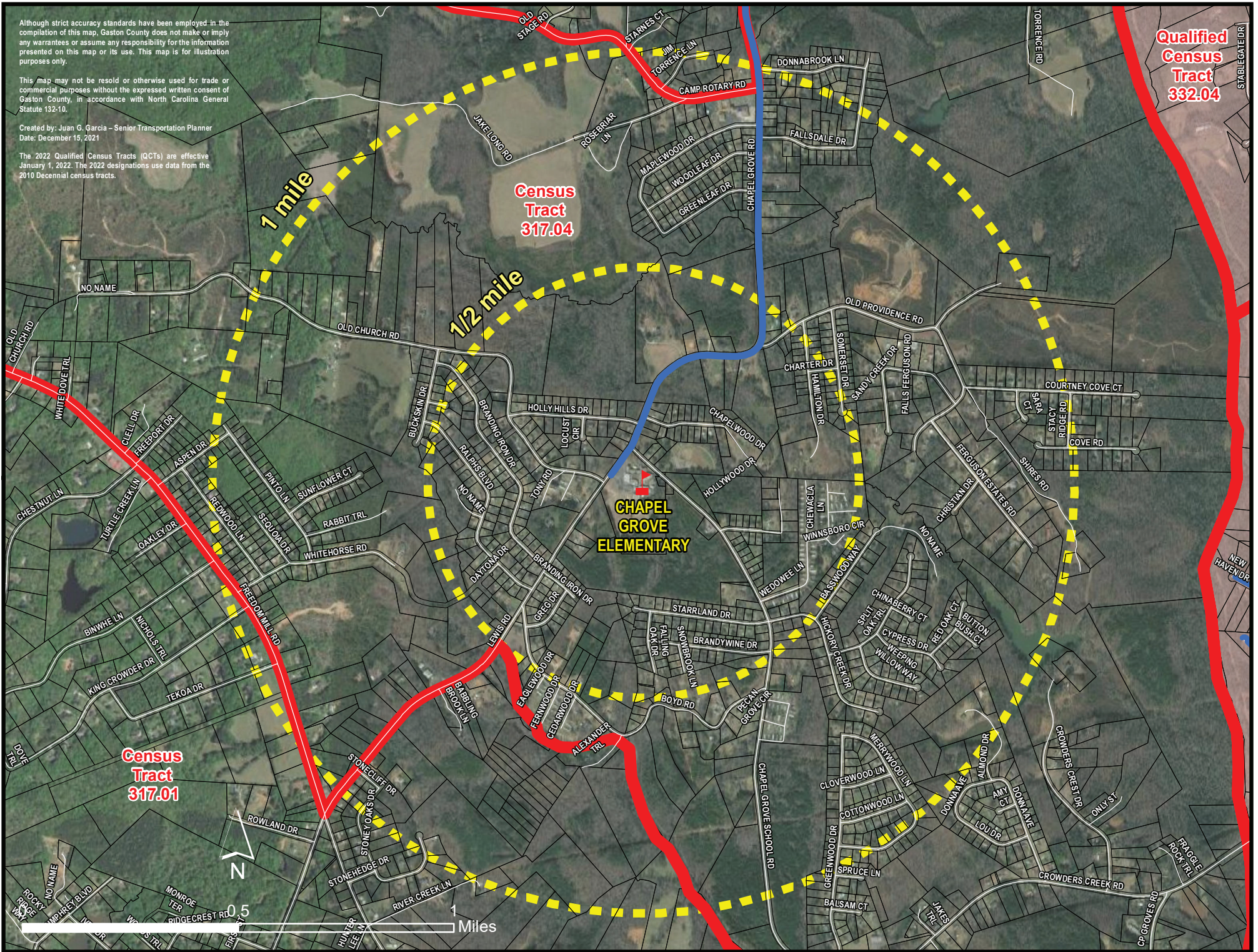
Total Expenditures: **Untitled**  
\$3,472,000.00

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Created by: Juan G. Garcia – Senior Transportation Planner  
Date: December 15, 2021

The 2022 Qualified Census Tracts (QCTs) are effective January 1, 2022. The 2022 designations use data from the 2010 Decennial census tracts.



**Qualified  
Census  
Tract  
332.04**

**Census  
Tract  
317.04**

**Census  
Tract  
317.01**

**CHAPEL  
GROVE  
ELEMENTARY**

1 mile

1/2 mile

N

0.5 1 Miles